

Krug Clos du Mesnil – 1979-2006

Complete vertical tasted blind



After Covid the yearlong Covid hibernation in Singapore one of Asia's largest collector organized this fabulous «revenge tasting» at his home. What generosity given the rarity and cost of these bottles. I only recently started tasting and comparing Champagne in a serious way and if I look at my 200+ tasting notes, Philipponnat Clos des Goisses, Krug Grande Cuvee and Egly-Ouriet BdN have emerged as my favorites. Thus, I am not (yet?) a Blanc de Blancs guy. Even more so I was looking forward to this tasting to learn more. Here are my takeaways (all bottles were decanted and served blind in random flights of three to four) to 12 invited guests, friends, MWs, people from the trade. Such are the relationships of this collector that Krug's CEO Margareth Henríquez also made an appearance on Zoom, giving us some more background on the wine before the tasting started.

The summary

- a. No news, the quality of Krug Clos du Mesnil is both high and constant. The wines have excellent acidity and precision but are not thin despite being BdB. True to the Krug style, there is generosity and richness. Grand in every way.
- b. The wine ages effortlessly. As good and fresh as the younger bottles were, the most impressive showings were 20+ years old. So don't hesitate to age them in your cellar.
- c. I found the tertiary aromas of this BdB much more interesting than the ones of aged white Burgs. The oxidative aromas are subtle and stay in the background. There is a very sophisticated taste of the older Clos du Mesnil where not only the color turns orange but the citrus moves towards tangerine with a hint of apple cider aromas similar to aged Chenin Blanc. There is also fennel, cedar and occasionally raspberry notes. Really quite interesting.

- d. As strange as it sounds, decanting Champagne into a water carafe is one of the best things you can do. You lose very little effervescence but you gain very much in aroma. After this tasting I started doing this myself more often with young releases. The difference is enormous, the nose opens up so much, so quickly.
- e. Also confirmed tonight, Champagne in general has much less bottle variation and cork taint. Partly this comes of course from the fact that the first 10 years or so all bottles age at the same place. From that angle Prestige Cuvee or quality Grower Champagne, typically in the 150-300\$ price range, are a really good deal. You get the best wines, the bottles are already aged and are highly consistent with little bottle variation and cork issues. What do you want more?



The tasting

1989 Krug Clos du Mesnil

This had the most oxidative nose in the flight intermixed with tangerine, apple cider, slight botrytis. Great acidity and freshness still. Good but, all proportions kept, among the weaker wines of the night. **18.25/20** (94/100).

1986 Krug Clos du Mesnil

This was the group's runner up in the first flight. Discrete nose at first, then opening up with tangerine, orange marmalade, biscuit, finely oxidative. More sweetness on the palate than the 1989. Very refined. **19/20** (97/100).

1980 Krug Clos du Mesnil

This was the group's favorite in this flight. Discrete nose also here. The palate was a real hit as there was an extra layer of sweetness with aromas of raspberry, caramel, sour plum and a hint of coffee. Stunning. What a start! **19.5/20** (99/100).

1992 Krug Clos du Mesnil

This had a hard time after the stellar 1980. More apple cider in the nose, some fennel and herbal notes as well. Very good acidity and a touch of bitterness on the finish. Not the ripest sample. Still good but among the weaker samples. **18.25/20** (94/100).





2006 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Medium yellow. Wonderful complete nose of brioche, cedar wood, mushrooms, sour dough with peony and acacia flowers. Really grand and complex. It was the Group's favorite in this flight. **19.25/20** (98/100).

2003 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Wonderfully mineralic nose with brioche, oak and citrus elements. There is a generous sweetness intermixed with the acidity, similar in style of the Comtes de Champagne of Taittinger. Excellent, looks as if it survived the canicule well. **19+/20** (97+/100).

2004 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Medium yellow. One of the most shy wines on the nose of the night. Aromas of bee wax, minerals with umami on the palate. A bit of apple cyder on the finish. Crisp and lean. A clear wait for this wine. It looks very compact and complete but does not show all it has. I would not open this before 2025. **18.75-19/20** (96-97/100).



1990 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Light orange color. Expressive nose of bergamot, peony, raspberry. Elegant and caressing palate, earl gray tea on the finish. Spectacular. This was the group's runner up in this flight. **19.5/20** (99/100).

1982 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Orange color. Nose of raspberry bonbon, sandal wood, tangerine. Great balance here as well, lovely dry extract on the finish. In very good shape for its age. **18.75/20** (96/100).

1985 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Deep orange color. Nose of honey, orange marmalade, dried apricot. Deep and complex, oxidative in a good way, very subtle. I really like how the Clos du Mesnil ages. The oxidation is not aggressive like in a Sherry or premixed white Burg but more like in a Port where it stays in the background adding to the concert instead of dominating it. Excellent freshness on the palate, long finish. Another Wow showing. This was the group's favorite of the flight. **19.5/20** (99/100).

1998 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Deep yellow. Next to the 1985 this showed clearly younger. Nose of white tulip, lily and iris intermixed with lemon rind and apple cider. Elegant palate, good freshness. Solid but not among the greats. **18.5/20** (95/100).



1981 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Orange color. Wonderful nose of pink roses, peach, sandal wood, quince and earl gray tea. Excellent palate that is not oxidative but just aged well. The group's favorite in this flight and one of three perfect showings tonight. Really impressive! **19.75-20/20** (100/100).

1983 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Orange color. Expressive nose of red flowers, oak, red apples, quince and orange peel. Wonderful palate, complex and long finish. The runner up in this flight. Very grand. **19.25/20** (98/100).

1995 Krug Clos du Mesnil

This showed more oxidation than the other wines tonight. Nose of nuts, wood, apple cider. Had quite a wild perlage still. Feels ambitious but a little disjointed. Complex finish. Good but not among the greats. **18.5/20** (95/100).

2000 Krug Clos du Mesnil

Medium yellow. May be not fair but this really struggled to entice me next to the stellar 1981 and 1983. It is young, but compared to the 2002 which we had on the next flight I found it to be rather common aromatically. A bit of white flowers, a bit of lemon, quite lovely/sweet even it felt on the palate. Good balance though. **18.25/20** (94/100).



2002 Krug Clos du Mesnil

The last flight was blessed with several “as good as it gets” bottles. First there was the 2002, which drank really young and did not benefit from the great tangerine notes of the older wines, yet the stellar quality here was obvious. Great nose of anise seeds, quince, yellow fruit. Chiseled palate, yet creamy with precision and length. Aristocratic! Don’t open before 2025 if you own this. **19.5/20** (99/100).

1988 Krug Clos du Mesnil

The last flight was blessed with several “as good as it gets” bottles. Lightly oxidative nose with nutty flavors, dried fruit, orange peel. Rich and generous palate, may be at tad too rich for me but really impressive though. The group’s runner up in this flight. **19.25/20** (98/100).

1979 Krug Clos du Mesnil

The last flight was blessed with several “as good as it gets” bottles. Arresting nose with complex aromas of tangerine, caramel, dried raisins. Despite its age, the palate is fresh with bright acidity. Endless finish. Simply stunning and the group’s favorite on this flight. **19.75-20/20** (100/100).

1996 Krug Clos du Mesnil

The modern day king of the red, the 1996 vintage, made it clear that it claims a seat on the podium. Fresh and zesty on the palate with great inner sweetness and complex aromas of yellow fruit, sweet spices and flowers. Precise and long finish. Reached a first impressive peak but looking at the 1979, 1981 this will only get better and surely reach triple digits. . **19.5+/20** (99+/100).

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